



TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

Arlington Planning Department, 730 Mass Ave,
Arlington MA

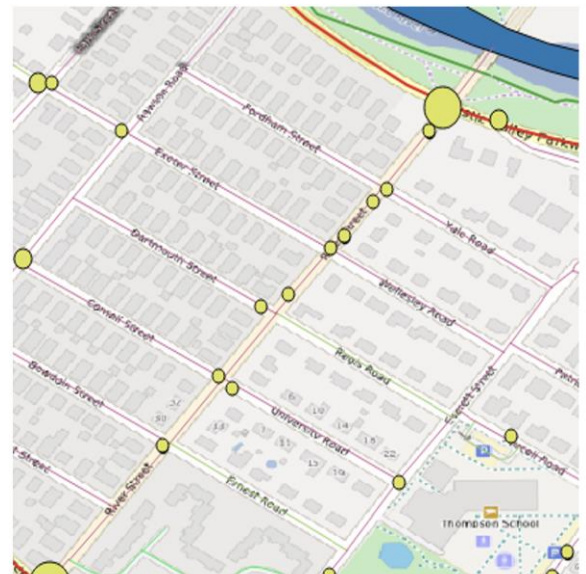
Date: May 10, 2023
To: The Select Board
From: The Transportation Advisory Committee
Subject: ACTION: RE: Request to make Wellesley Road one-way ; Safety Concerns for Traffic Supervisors at River St

Memorandum:

In 2019, residents of Wellesley Road petitioned to make the street one-way, going towards River Street, citing heavy motor vehicle and pedestrian traffic, related to Thompson School, just before the start of the school day. The Transportation Advisory Committee has since received a letter from the School Board concerning the safety of Students and Traffic Supervisors on adjoining River Street, which was part of the area studied by the working group.

The figure to the right shows the area, with yellow dots representing state reported motor-vehicle crashes between 2013 and 2017. The small dots represent single crashes, while the larger dot (at River / Mystic Valley Parkway) represents multiple crashes.

While a traffic supervisor is located at River / Cornell / University, Exeter and Wellesley also provide a direct route to the school, especially from the neighborhood in the northwest corner of the map (Precinct 5). Further analysis, including traffic counts, begins on page 2 of this report.



Area near Wellesley Road

RECOMMENDATIONS

We cannot support the petition to make Wellesley one-way, as it would simply shift substantial traffic to Regis Road, which is a private way. However, the following non-regulatory actions are recommended:

1. Provide stop bars and crosswalks, parallel to River Street, at the eastbound approaches for all streets intersecting River Street. These approaches are all controlled by stop signs. For this issue, providing crosswalks and stop bars at the eastern ends of Exeter and Dartmouth streets

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is of particular importance. This will facilitate pedestrian access to the traffic supervisor at River / University / Cornell.

2. Install edge lines, approximately 3' from each pavement edge on Wellesley, to narrow the apparent path of motor vehicle travel.
3. Educate students and parents to make use of the traffic supervisor for crossing River Street, and to walk facing traffic on streets without sidewalks.
4. Longer term, provide a sidewalk, on at least the south-side of Wellesley Street
5. Longer term, improve bicycle, pedestrian accommodation along River Street.

In addition, we do recommend the following regulatory actions:

1. The Town seek approval from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, Highway Division, to establish a quarter mile long school zone along River St from just north of Yale Rd to just south of Amherst St given the well-established school walking route that crosses River at University / Cornell as well as the observations of pedestrians crossing River St at other unmarked crosswalks to travel to Thompson School.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Smith, Laura Swan – Working Group
Laura Swan – Chair

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PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

Wellesley Road is a public way, with right-of-way width of 40 feet, a paved width of approximately 25 feet and no sidewalk. Regis Road runs parallel to Wellesley Road. It is a private way, marked as one-way from River to Everett.

Corner of Everett and Wellesley, looking west



Everett Street is a public way, with sidewalks on both sides in the area of Wellesley Road.

River Street is a heavily traveled collector. Although the west side of River Street has a sidewalk, the right-of-way width on River Street is only 50 feet, providing little room for sidewalks and parking strips. Exeter Street is also a local street, with sidewalks, and provides a link to the northwest between Rawson Road and Park Street. There is a marked crosswalk across River at Cornell / University, with a traffic supervisor at school start and end times.

PEDESTRIAN and VEHICLE ACTIVITY

Members of the working group observed activity on three occasions, all between 7:50 AM and 8:15 AM:

- Monday November 18, 2019 (Scott)
- Tuesday November 19, 2019 (Laura)
- Friday November 22, 2019 (Scott & Laura)

It should be noted that during this period, sidewalk access on the east side of Rawson Road (a street that runs parallel to River Street, one block to the west) was difficult, due to curb ramp construction. Early in the week, construction was underway at Rawson and Amherst, Bowdoin, and Cornell. On Friday, construction was underway at Rawson and Exeter. This may have led more pedestrians to travel to the corner of Exeter



River and Exeter, looking north

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and River, rather than using Rawson and Cornell to travel to River Street.

Activities at the east end of Wellesley Road (near the intersection of Everett) are summarized below

Date: 19-Nov-19, 7:50-8:20 AM
Weather: High 30s and rainy

Time	Ped Xing at Everett St	Westbound on Wellesley			Eastbound on Wellesley			Notes on Eastbound traffic:
		Car	Ped.	Bike	Car	Ped.	Bike	
7:50-7:55		2			5			Car stopped for 3 min at house, continu
7:55-8:00	1	2			6	1		Peds: 1 child alone, Cars: 2 left/thru
8:00-8:05		3			11	7		Peds: See A, Cars: 1 left/thru
8:05-8:10	2	4	3	1	23	20		Peds: See B, Cars: 1 left/thru
School begins at 8:10								
8:10-8:15		9			21	1		Peds: 1 adult, Cars: 1 left/thru
8:15-8:20		16	3		5			Peds: See C, Cars: 3 left/thru

Total	3	36	6	1	71	29	0
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Note A: Peds: 1 car parked and walked to school, Total 4 adults, 3 kids
Note B: Peds: 3 cars parked and walked to school, Total 6 adults, 14 kids (3 kids were walkin
Note C: Adult pedestrians, 3 returning to parked cars

In a 30-minute observation period only 8 cars came eastbound on Wellesley Road and continued straight on Patrick Street or turned left. A total of 4 cars parked on Wellesley Road and the passengers exited to walk toward Thompson School. Three pedestrians crossed Wellesley Road at Everett Street towards Thompson School. At the peak period, traffic on Wellesley was consistently backed up for several cars because they were all trying to turn right onto a line of cars on Everett Street.

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Date: 22-Nov-19, 7:50-8:20 AM
Weather: Low 50s and cloudy

Time	Ped Xing at Everett St	Westbound on Wellesley			Eastbound on Wellesley			Notes on Eastbound traffic:
		Car	Ped.	Bike	Car	Ped.	Bike	
7:50-7:55		5	1		2	4		Peds: 2 children alone
7:55-8:00					2			
8:00-8:05	1	4			9	11		One car parked, peds walked to school
8:05-8:10	2				14	15	3	
School begins at 8:10								
8:10-8:15		16	4		12	7		Two cars parked, peds walked to school
8:15-8:20		6			5			

Total	3	31	5	0	44	37	0
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A total of 3 cars parked on Wellesley Road and the passengers exited to walk toward Thompson School. Three pedestrians crossed Wellesley Road at Everett Street towards Thompson School. At the peak period, traffic on Wellesley was consistently backed up for several cars because they were all trying to turn right onto a line of cars on Everett Street. Cars that parked on Wellesley Road were there until 8:25 or later.

Activities at the west end of Wellesley Road (at the intersection of River) are summarized below.

Date: 18-Nov-19, 7:50-8:10 AM
Weather: 35 degrees and cloudy

Time	Southbound on River		Westbound on Wellesley			Eastbound on Wellesley			Notes on Eastbound traffic:
	Ped.	Bike	Car	Ped.	Bike	Car	Ped.	Bike	
7:50-8:10	13	5	9	0	0	33	26	2	Mostly crossings from Exeter
School begins at 8:10									

Date: 22-Nov-19, 7:50-8:15 AM
Weather: Low 50s and cloudy

Time	Southbound on River		Westbound on Wellesley			Eastbound on Wellesley			Notes on Eastbound traffic:
	Pedest	Bike	Car	Ped.	Bike	Car	Ped.	Bike	
8:00-8:10	17	3	6	0	0	21	20	4	Mostly crossings from Exeter
School begins at 8:10									
8:10-8:15	0	0	9	0	0	12	2	0	Mostly crossings from Exeter
Total	17	3	15	0	0	33	22	4	

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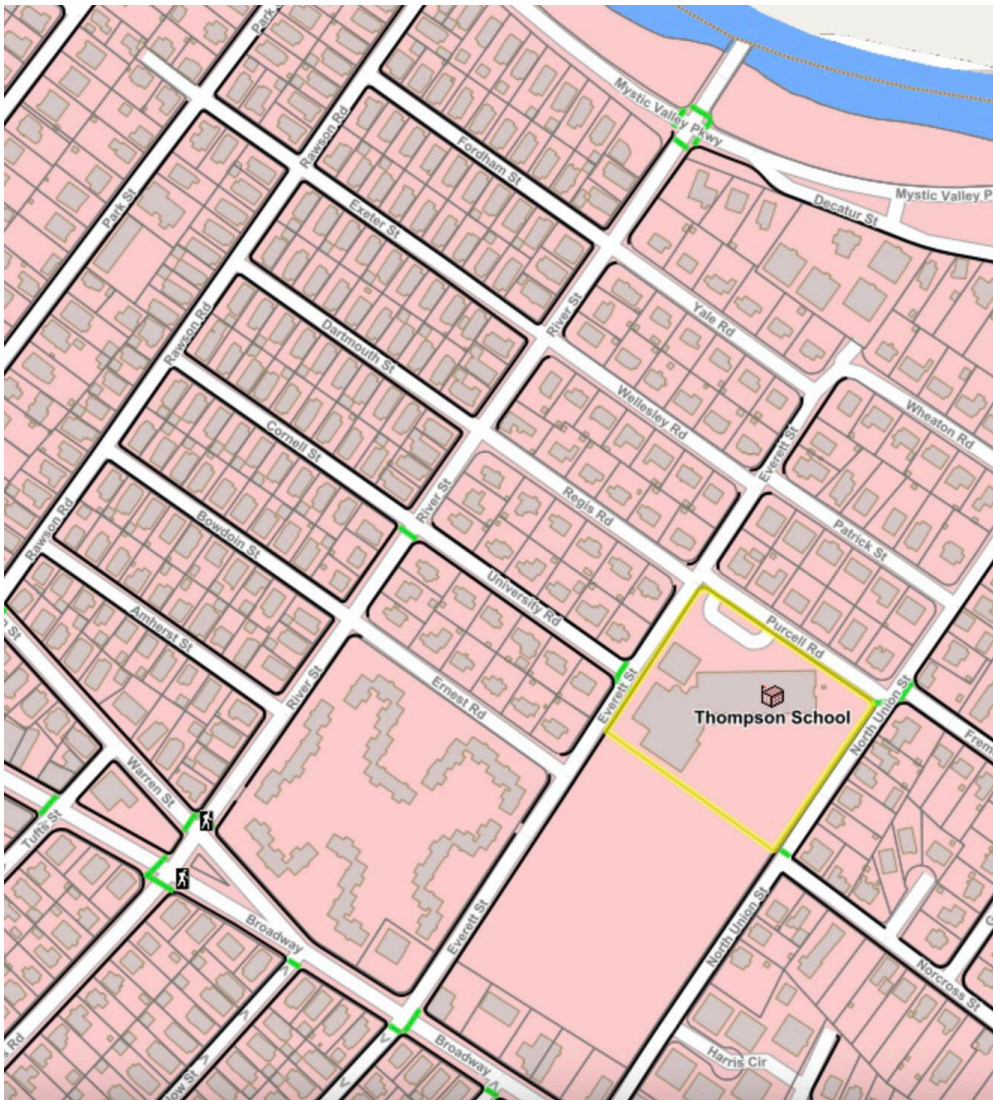
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Motorists waiting on Exeter would often block unmarked crosswalk on west side of River St. On several occasions, southbound motorists on River stopped for pedestrians waiting to cross from Exeter.

LIMITS OF A SCHOOL ZONE ON RIVER STREET

Walking Safety to School Map below shows the District Plan for pedestrians to walk to Thompson School and cross River St at Mystic Valley Parkway, University Rd or Broadway.

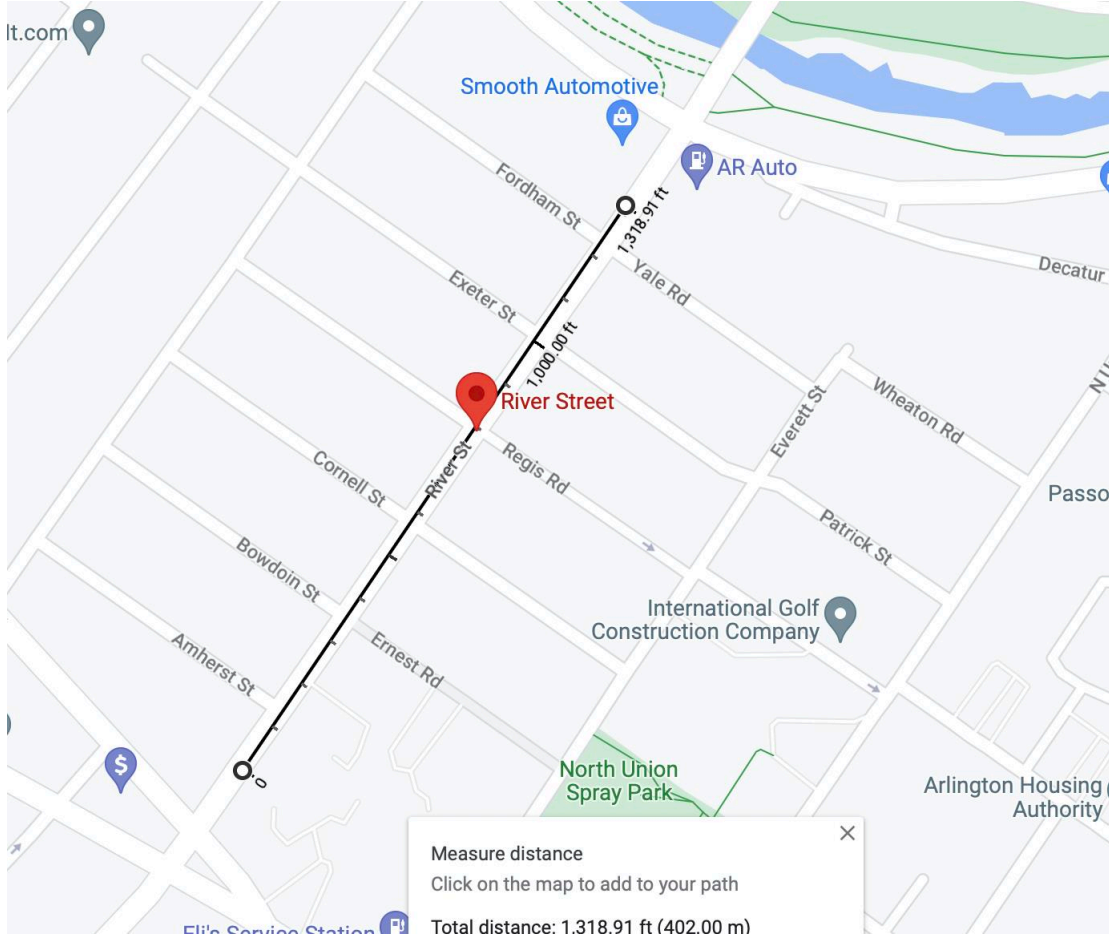


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The map below shows the maximum quarter mile school zone that MassDOT regulations will allow:



It is our recommendation that the maximum school zone length of $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile be used given that many pedestrians and bicyclists traveling to Thompson School crossed River St at one of these cross streets. This new regulation would meet all of the warrants set forth in the revised Massachusetts Amendments to the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (2022) as shown below:

Section 7A.05: Warrants for Establishing a **School Zone**

Standard:

For a **school zone** to be established, all the following conditions shall be met:

- A. The facility is a school (see Section 7A.01).
- B. Children walk or bicycle to or from the school and are expected to cross or enter the roadway where the **school zone** is proposed; or the school and related facilities (e.g., classrooms, cafeteria, gymnasium, playground, athletic fields, parking lots) are separated by the roadway and require the children to cross the roadway on foot to access the facilities.
- C. The school facility or municipality provides a plan showing the routes that students will use to walk and/or bike to the school and shows the limits of the proposed **school zone**.
- D. The municipality provides written documentation of their support and/or approval of the **school zone**.

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